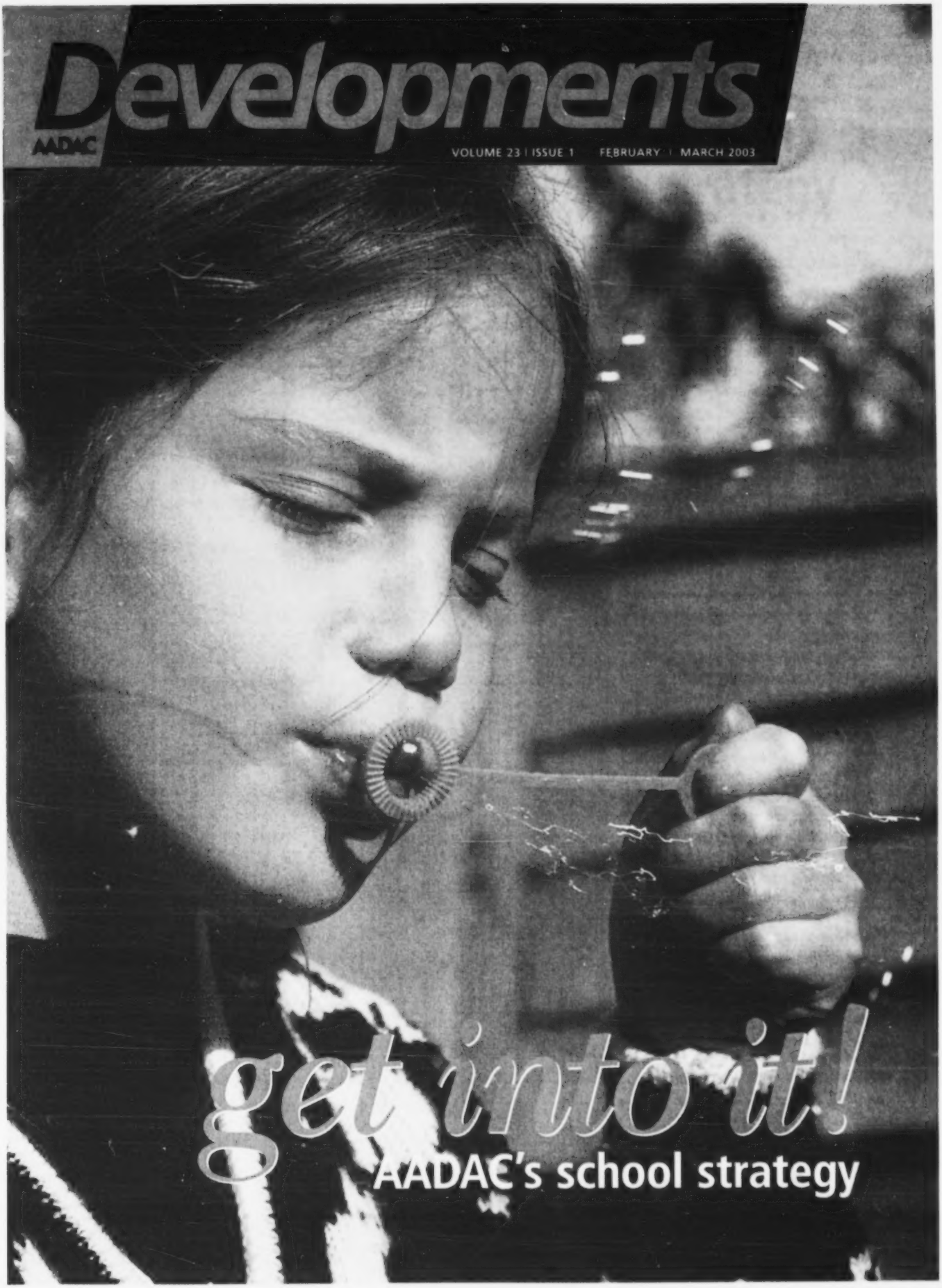
AADAC

Developments

VOLUME 23 | ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY | MARCH 2003



get into it!

AADAC's school strategy

In this issue, *Developments* looks at three programs and activities that directly influence youth and addictions in Alberta. The AADAC Youth Advisory Council helps AADAC keep its services and materials relevant to youth. AADAC's School Strategy is a careful, research-based plan for preventing problems that proceed from the abuse of alcohol, other drugs and gambling through education of and early intervention with Alberta youth. The coordinated and ongoing actions of the Camrose Drug Task Force when faced by a substance abuse problem demonstrate a response very much in keeping with AADAC's traditional approach to prevention and treatment in rural Alberta: consult the community, act on its specific needs, employ its unique set of strengths, and support it with knowledge and resources.

AADAC's school strategy

By Sheila Bradley, Supervisor, Community Prevention, AADAC Youth Services, Calgary

AADAC has worked successfully and creatively with students and teachers across Alberta to deliver school-based addictions prevention programs for many years. Programs like Expecting Respect, Peer Support and Teaming Up for Tobacco-Free Kids are examples of partnerships between AADAC and schools.

Last year there were 390,000 students in Alberta's 2,043 public and separate schools. The demand for prevention programming in schools will grow as government and communities continue to focus on youth. For youth who are beginning to experience addiction related problems, early intervention can get education and career on track, reduce the need for extensive service, and allow them to become more stable, responsible and healthy adults.

To meet this challenge, AADAC is enhancing services to schools. The AADAC School Strategy is a model for how AADAC will work with others to provide more effective prevention and early intervention school-based programs across Alberta.

AADAC's School Strategy is founded on the long experience of AADAC staff in designing and delivering prevention strategies in schools, and research that informs us what works. Input from the Cross-Ministry Intersectoral Working Group that includes membership from Alberta Learning, Justice and Mental Health and from AADAC's Youth Advisory Council has been crucial as well.

Research shows that strength-based, comprehensive and long-term programs are the most effective.

Young people are least likely to abuse alcohol, other drugs and gambling when prevention programs are provided throughout their school years. The most effective programs promote development of personal strengths, positive relationships with adults and peers, and commitment to a healthy lifestyle, as well as providing information about alcohol, other drugs, and gambling. In such programs, information is reinforced over time and the focus is on resiliency, or positive assets.

A major focus of AADAC's School Strategy is to develop new prevention programs for grades 4, 7, 9 and 11. These grades were chosen because they are significant transition periods. AADAC staff and teachers from across the province worked together to create the Own Your Zone program, developed for Grade 7 classrooms. The 10-week program was piloted last year and the feedback received was excellent. Feedback from teachers, students and AADAC staff has been incorporated into the revised edition and it will be delivered to schools early in 2003. Resources for grades 4, 7 and 9 have been completed and the Grade 11 resources will be available within a year.

AADAC resources have always been closely linked to the curriculum requirements for students in schools and many are on Alberta Learning's list of recommended resources. AADAC plans to expand this link. At the moment, we focus on two courses: Health and Wellness and CALM (Career and Life Management). Addiction education could also be presented in Drama, Social Studies, and Language Arts courses. Teachers will be able to select AADAC resources suitable for students across a number of course areas. Lesson plans will be found in easy-to-use templates at AADAC's Parents and Teachers Web site. Increasing AADAC's Web-based materials will allow teachers to quickly review lesson plans and to select those that best match the needs of their students and the curriculum.

Preventing and treating addiction to nicotine is now part of AADAC's mandate and tobacco use prevention programs will be a significant part of AADAC's School Strategy. Partnerships with schools, health authorities and other community agencies to deliver Teaming Up for Tobacco-Free Kids across Alberta have begun. "Teaming Up" is a tobacco prevention program for grades 4, 5 and 6 that recruits mentors within the community to encourage children to choose to be tobacco-free.

AADAC's School Strategy supports the involvement of adults as role models and mentors in the lives of children and youth. Involving the community in providing programming to children and youth is another theme which is supported by promising and best practice theory: children that have at least one consistent, positive adult involved in their lives have a partner in decreasing their risk of substance abuse. Communities that believe they have a responsibility to provide support, encouragement and time are demonstrating the very elements so important in the life of children and adolescents.

Young people are least likely to abuse alcohol, other drugs and gambling when prevention programs are provided throughout their school years.

Many AADAC resources are on Alberta Learning's list of recommended resources.

AADAC's School Strategy will provide a new model for delivering coordinated, accessible, and comprehensive prevention and early intervention programs specifically to those grades that are key transition points for children and youth. We invite you to become involved in AADAC's School Strategy by logging on to www.aadac.com or contacting AADAC.

Thinking outside the box

A prompt community response to the abuse of methamphetamine

By Mary Wilton, Supervisor, AADAC Camrose Area Office

THE IMPETUS FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION around an emerging crystal meth* problem in Camrose, Alberta came from a number of different directions. A social needs survey released in the fall of 2002 by the City of Camrose noted a perceived increase of the use of some drugs in the community, particularly crystal meth. Local agencies were noticing a younger population becoming harmfully involved and the school division seconded a principal to develop a school-based response to drugs. A workshop presented by the Camrose City Police was the vehicle for service providers to come together to educate themselves about the drug and find ways to deal with the perceived increase in methamphetamine use. Of the 64 people attending the workshop, I was among a sizable group that stayed afterwards to form a Drug Task Force, which would quickly put together a coordinated, commonsense response to the community problem.

The success of this project followed from a unique set of circumstances: strong commitment from the regional school division, a willingness among agencies to share time and expertise with each other, and involvement from youth and parents affected by crystal meth.

The multi-pronged approach to the problem that began taking shape last October continues today. It incorporates information, prevention and treatment.

INFORMATION: The Task Force decided that educating students, teachers and parents was key. Information packages were sent out to all the schools within the Battle River School Division. The acting school superintendent wrote an open letter to parents outlining the school division's commitment to solutions and encouraging parents to talk to their children.

A series of training sessions and meetings were held for school administrators, trustees and board members, for frontline school and community staff, and for the general public. Information advertisements were placed in regional papers and the school division communications officer sent out regular press releases. Information efforts continue with plans for press releases, more informative advertising, and more public meetings and workshops for 2003.

PREVENTION: Realizing that teachers greatly influence the students they see daily, Task Force members have planned presentations for every school in the division, using combinations of local police resources, the school principal chairing the task force, AADAC staff, and Detective Steve Walton, author of "First Response Guide to Street Drugs." Teachers are also being trained as potential referral sources.

TREATMENT: The Task Force created a community-based treatment model specifying a streamlined assessment and referral process. This means that schools, agencies and parents know where to start, and that local agencies work as an efficient team to help each young person in trouble with crystal meth.

In response to the diversity of the needs described by parents of youth involved with crystal meth, we have designed a flexible treatment model. Regular case conferences help us to make sure that the youth requiring services, the young person's family, and appropriate team members are communicating and are responding effectively. Youth are assessed according to their degree of risk, the protecting factors in their lives, and their willingness to receive treatment. They are thus selected for treatment of high, medium or low intensity. Local resources are enlisted for young people requiring treatment of medium or low intensity.

Youth requiring high-intensity service are detoxified under the care of the psychiatrist in the local hospital. Well before a patient is discharged, Camrose AADAC staff notify the AADAC Youth Services Centre (AYS) in Edmonton to save a place for that

Local agencies worked as a team to help each young person in trouble with crystal meth.

* Crystal meth is one of the street names for the smokable form of the stimulant methamphetamine

>>>

>>>
client, ensuring that he or she will not wait long for admission to intensive day treatment. When a young person is released from hospital, the Task Force has already ensured that community support for the youth and his or her family is in place. For the weeks until admission to AYS, this support builds on the client's readiness for change and gives the client and family a foundation for ongoing community support.

At this writing, the Task Force is in the process of producing a treatment handbook that includes flow charts to illustrate the assessment and referral process.

Whatever the needs of each young person or family, our community's response has gone well beyond the expertise of particular social agencies. An existing parent support group is an invaluable part of the treatment continuum. With assistance from youth, the Task Force created "caring cards" that make it easier for teens to reach out to each other. The willingness of youth to tell us about their actual drug experiences meant that the Task Force could create better information, prevention and treatment strategies.

Deliberately thinking "outside the box" allowed us to make better use of both formal and informal community resources, to be creative in solving problems, and to learn from the people who are most affected by those problems. The dedication of the Task Force members and their willingness to think beyond agency boundaries helped to create a collaborative atmosphere. The weekly Task Force meetings became opportunities to share information and evaluate the strategies as they were being implemented. In sharing this time together, the Task Force worked to become a community team.

All of this happened in two short months. A whirlwind of activity has created the community response model. The challenge for the months ahead will be to maintain the positive energy as the community continues to develop and implement our vision of a comprehensive model of information, prevention and treatment services. Thinking outside the box has allowed us as a community to create unique solutions to a need we couldn't afford to ignore.

A voice for youth at AADAC

By Brian Lohoway, Youth Web Site Coordinator, AADAC Youth Services Edmonton

AADAC's Youth Advisory Council is now three years old. The Council reviews AADAC materials and programs to ensure that they are relevant to youth. It comprises 12 teenagers from across the province, aged 15 to 18 years, and their adult mentors who are AADAC staff. The teens have varying experiences with alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and gambling: in the current council, some have battled their own addictions with the help of an AADAC Youth Treatment Centre program, and one is involved with an agency funded by AADAC. The rest are simply young people interested in helping to reduce and prevent addictions in others.

The AADAC mentors have shown a keen interest in working with these youth and providing them with an opportunity that they will be able to use for life. Teens and mentors have a close relationship, as one teen testifies: "My mentor is a great person and very easy to get along with. She helps me out a lot."

In the last year, the council added a new event to their annual agenda: they kicked off the year with a teambuilding retreat. The work year for the council approximates the school year, so the retreat was held at the end of August. Three AADAC staff led a camping trip to River Cove. Mentors and teens learned and worked as equals, breaking down barriers as the group acquired camping skills from setting up tents to cooking to keeping their food safe from animals. The retreat allowed the council to get to know the new members and to say good-bye to members who were leaving.

The cohesiveness and co-operation fostered by the retreat has continued at the council's bi-monthly meetings in Edmonton. At these meetings, council members appraise AADAC prevention, treatment and information services for youth for interest, relevance, and appropriateness. They offer ideas for the creation of new youth-related educational and promotional material, assess existing materials and give feedback on treatment programs.

When the Youth Advisory Council meets, they have two days (Friday night and Saturday) to review projects, learn some new life skills, and have some fun. The council has shown great commitment to work through assigned tasks. Tirelessly going through documents, working through drafts and providing feedback, the team members never complain about the projects that they undertake.

Youth are often labeled as being selfish, reckless and impulsive. The youth in this group break all of those stereotypes. It always amazes me to hear the group ask for more tasks to do. I feel encouraged when the Youth Advisory Council say they would like to try their hand at designing some youth resources for AADAC. In their work with AADAC, these young people have demonstrated a strong leadership potential.

The Youth Advisory Council works hard behind the scenes, helping AADAC stay relevant to the young people we serve.

AADAC
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

Developments
Canadian
Publications Mail
Product Sales Agreement
No. 40062405

VISION

A healthy society that is free from the harmful effects of alcohol, other drugs and gambling

MISSION

Making a difference in people's lives by assisting Albertans to achieve freedom from the harmful effects of alcohol, other drugs and gambling

VALUES

We value people, treat them with respect and believe in their ability to succeed.

We value individuals, families and communities as partners in addressing addiction problems.

We value staff and their knowledge, skills, creativity, initiative, and expertise.

We value service delivery that is grounded in research and experience.

THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENTS

To enhance allied professionals' knowledge and understanding of addictions issues. **Developments** is published six times a year and is circulated to 16,000 readers worldwide. Copyright© 2003 by AADAC. The opinions expressed by individual authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

ADVISORY BOARD

Deb Deeter, Edmonton; Alison Gooley, Edmonton; Terry Lind, Edmonton; Sharon Steinhauer, St. Paul; Grace Whitehouse, Edmonton; Cathy Wood, Calgary

If you want to advertise a conference, course, or special event that would be of interest to the readers of **Developments**, contact the editor about ad sizes and prices.

EDITOR Deirdre Ah Shene, PHONE 780.422.2798
Deirdre.AhShene@aadac.gov.ab.ca
DESIGN Beata Kurpiński, PHONE 780.422.3006

ISSN 0714-1017

To subscribe to **Developments**, please complete this form and return to the address below. We welcome you to our readership at no charge. Your personal information will be used only to send you information related to AADAC. To send in a change of address, change the number of copies you receive or remove your name from our list, please complete the form and include your mailing label or subscription number. This information is also required when phoning or faxing a change request. **Please type or print clearly.**

SUBSCRIPTION NO. NO. OF COPIES REQUESTED

NAME

ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS

POSTAL CODE PHONE NUMBER ( )

SEND TO Resource Agent, AADAC
#200, 10909 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB T5J 3M9
PHONE 780.422.1000 **FAX** 780.422.5237
E-MAIL rdm@aadac.gov.ab.ca

AADAC RESOURCES FOR YOUTH AND SCHOOLS

Cool? Identity, Drugs, and Fitting In

This fast-paced, 23-minute video, developed by and featuring teens, explores the complex issues of identity, drugs, and fitting in. The video blends real-life stories with youth exploration of what it means to be cool. It looks at the role drugs and alcohol play when teens are trying to establish a sense of belonging. The video looks at how common it is for teens to use alcohol and other drugs, how use relates to "fitting in," and the point at which use becomes abuse. Issues are viewed from both rural and urban perspectives. Youth who have experienced problems as a result of their drug use share their stories. Other teens share their opinions and points of view. The video informs and entertains, encourages thoughtful discussion, and helps youth to make healthy decisions.

Own Your Zone

Based on Alberta Learning curriculum, this program facilitates discussion among Alberta's Grade 7 students and encourages them to make healthful choices about alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, other drugs and gambling. It provides an interactive environment for helping students to understand the effects, risks and consequences of unhealthy choices. It helps students to form their personal value-based philosophy of abstention from drugs and gambling. *Own Your Zone* aims to empower young people in a way that is creative, relevant and fun. *Own Your Zone* explores personal journeys towards healthy choices. Each journey begins with information, picks up skills and supports, and leads to a commitment to abstain from, or at least defer, intoxicant use and gambling.

Single copies of these resources are available free of charge to Albertans. If you reside outside Alberta or require multiple copies, *Own Your Zone* is available for $30 plus GST, shipping and handling. The video *Cool?* is available for $99 and the discussion guide is available for $20. Again, GST, shipping and handling are extra. To order within Alberta, contact your local AADAC office (in your phone book under Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission). Outside Alberta, contact AADAC Resource Development, Suite 200, 10909 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton T5J 3M9, PHONE TOLL-FREE 1.800.280.9616, FAX 780.422.5237, or E-MAIL rdm@aadac.gov.ab.ca.

ADVERTISING

Courses, British Columbia

Delight & the Unexpected: Narrative Therapy with Individuals, Families, Groups and Communities

PRESENTER Michael White (Australia)
March 31 & April 1, 2003, Vancouver, British Columbia

Pragmatics of Hope: Solution-Focused Therapy with Long-Term Problems and Trauma

PRESENTERS Insoo Kim Berg and Yvonne Dolan
May 22 and 23, 2003, Vancouver, British Columbia

Alcohol and Drug Training For Youth Practitioners (4 day course)

PRESENTERS Dr. Ray Baker, Dr. Gabor Mate, Dr. Ross Laird, Rob Axsen and Scott Rintoul
June 2-5, 2003, Burnaby, British Columbia.

For further course information,
PHONE 1.800.456.5424
E-MAIL jackhirose@shaw.ca

To download a brochure, www.jackhirose.com

Co-occurring Disorder Conference

The 11th Annual David Berman Memorial Conference will be held in Vancouver on May 29-30, 2003. This year's conference features Dr. Shawn Shea, a psychiatrist from Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire, who will present on family interventions and suicide assessment. Dr. Dennis Daley, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, will present on treatment compliance and clinical applications of motivational strategies. Dr. Rick Rawson, from the UCLA School of Medicine, will provide an update on "club drugs" and benzodiazepines. Finally, Dr. Deborah Schwartz, a Vancouver psychiatrist, will talk about her work in integrated group psychotherapy with eating disordered patients. Visit www.faceconferences.com.